They Sing in the Night

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AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

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COMPLIMENTS

OF

Merrill Maynard

TO

MISS HELGA LENDE

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BRAILLE POETS' GUILD, Inc.

Post Office Box 245

TAUNTON, MASS.

BRAILLE POETS' GUILD, Inc.

P. O. BOX 245 TAUNTON, MASS.

From the Blind Who Seek to Help Their Fellows

Is there hope for aspiring writers who are blind, especially sightless shut-ins? A few blind people are trying to do something about it, they are organized as the Braille Poets' Guild, Inc. This book you have received is the most cumulative evidence of Guild accomplishments among more than three hundred members.

No art is more closely linked with the elevation of spiritual, mental and physical well-being. Nothing is more reflective of ones self than the creative product of this art. You have received this little volume as an invitation to add vigor to this serviceful undertaking.

All service is rendered the blind without cost to them and include; a braille magazine featuring work of blind writers, counselling, instruction in writing supplies and equipment, a braille library of specially prepared books, contests, and the future includes arrangements for writers' conferences for advanced studies as well as a general center for the blind.

You are personally invited to lend a cooperative hand. If you are sufficiently impressed to make this book a part of your personal library, please send check or money-order to the above for no less than $1.50 or return the book with any recommendation you may be willing to give.

Thank you most cordially,

BRAILLE POETS' GUILD, Inc.

Gambier, Ohio
19 November 1948

Dear Mr. Maynard,

Now I have had time to read your anthology, and I must say the blind poets see a great deal more beauty than many poets who are not blind, and keep a braver heart and more courageous spirit in an uncertain world. I should like to see the spirit which activates these poems diffused through our ailing civilization, among those who are wilfully blind and, having eyesight, choose only sordid things to dwell upon.

Many congratulations to your singers in the night.

Your own poems have a firm, masculine movement that sings clearly and confidently. I think I like best the two on page 44: "Harvest Smoke" and "Think on These."

I hope you have found an instructor for your class.

With best wishes for the good work.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Hillyer, (Professor and Poet)

Jan. 15, 1947

Dear Mr. Maynard,

I am very grateful to you for your interesting letter of Jan. 5, which was forwarded to me from the Library of Congress, and also for your very interesting book, which I received. There is some very sensitive writing in the verse that makes up the book. It seems to me that the Braille Poets' Guild is one of the most interesting and most worthy literary organizations in the country, and I greatly admire your courage and enthusiasm.

Sincerely yours,

Allen Tate (Formerly, Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress)

HV 2335
M

Compiled and Edited by
MERRILL A. V. MAYNARD
Executive Director of the
BRAILLE POETS' GUILD, INC.
POST OFFICE BOX 245
TAUNTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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THEY SING IN THE NIGHT

A YEAR OF INSPIRATIONAL POETRY

BOOK I
1948

FOREWORD

The BRAILLE POETS' GUILD, INC. is an organization of blind home-folk who are progressive pioneers in creative home projects. These projects include the publishing of a freely distributed Braille poetry magazine to which they contribute their own writings for mutual benefit. The magazine is vitalizing its very name by truly being the *Inspiration* of friends. Of these friends, some are limited to the world that reaches their hearts through eager hands, because they are deaf-blind. The world of others is increased through use of the radio and talking book. All of these are stirred by the common bond to give expression to their lives and thereby participate with the great outer world.

Many members of the Guild have demonstrated a complete mastery of the art of poetry writing. Few of them have attained to any sort of recognition because they have not had the opportunity. To set a pace, by sharing one another's work in our magazine, was not enough. We decided to make these poems available to our friends in the world of printer's ink, by publishing the poems that appeared in the Braille Bard Department of "Inspiration" during its first year.

We extend a very special invitation to you educators, psychiatrists, and critics. Not that every poem will appeal to everybody, but everybody is certain to find something that will appeal to him.

We have such high respect for our forerunners that we have not sought to produce the counterpart of Homer, Milton, and Dr. Helen Keller. Our accomplishment in this volume clearly indicates fresh and stimulating individualities who are alive in their poetry.

M. Maynard
25 Clinton Street
Taunton, Mass.
May 30, 1948

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The poems in this volume are reprinted from the Braille Poetry magazine "Inspiration." Some of them had appeared previously in other publications for which we here make appropriate acknowledgment.

John J. Duffy, MUSIC FOR STRINGS, a privately printed brochure from which we have used: Lullaby, Sunset, O Lonely Night, To A Sunflower.

Dr. Vladimir Karapetoff, Professor, RHYTHMICAL TALES OF STORMY YEARS, published during his blindness, from which he granted us permission to use: I Shall Come Back To You, An Unseen Pillar, Love's Gifts.

Clarence Hawkes, HOLIDAY HOPES, published by Christopher House, the publishers granted permission for using: Sunshine and Shadow, The Pioneer Spirit, By The Yule-Log, Mother Nature.

Merrill A. V. Maynard, AMERICA MINE AND OTHER SELECTIONS, a privately published brochure from which these titles are here reprinted with the author's permission: Spring Love, The Painter and the Colors, America Mine, Walden in Autumn, This Today, Think on These.

Essie Jeannette Thornburg gave permission to reprint the poem THE BEAUTIFUL which was first published in "Christian Home Magazine."

From TALKING BOOK TOPICS we have used "The Voice," by Wilbur Sheron and from THE SKYLARK we have used "This Heart" by C. S. Glass.

Through the Hadley Correspondence School for the Blind, Inc., course in verse writing, conducted by Donald W. Hathaway, M. A., the following poems were presented as being particularly meritorious: To The Winged Victory, Hart E. Richelsen; To Helen Keller, Hart E. Richelsen; Brow of the Hill, Hart E.

Richelsen; Sister Martha, Sister Mary de Sales; Grace Before Meals in the Refectory, Sister Mary de Sales; Captured, James Ernest Bell; Nor Far Away, Martha Jane Ragan; To My Reflection in the Mirror, Essie Jeannette Thornburg; Shadow Time, Elsie Cowan; Priez Pour Nous, Rachel Jacoby; Saw Mill, Fred Filion; Thumbnail Garden, Lucille Lemp; Waiting for the Mail, Lucille Lemp; Journey's End, Marion Johns; Love Patterns, Elsie Cowan; Oncoming Freight, Richard Kinney; Hill Winds, Elsie Cowan; Louis Braille, Fred Filion; Swifter Than All Speed, Sister Mary de Sales; Like As A Chandler Fashions His Candles, Sister Mary de Sales; Be Listening, Mother, Essie Jeannette Thornburg; Carol on the Wire, Grace Hitchcock; Rail Fence, Edward C. Joseph; Your Year, Dorothy Anne Reece; Daybreak, V.; Born to the Soil, Rae W. Jacoby; Pathway Back, H. E. Richelsen; New Neighbors, Elsie Cowan; Country Summer, Richard Kinney.

This volume would not be possible without the help of every contributing poet, and workers such as: Mrs. Edith N. Maynard for selecting and typing, Miss Martha M. Rose for typing, Mrs. Edith Baylies, Dr. Robert B. Irwin, American Foundation for the Blind, and Dr. Gabriel Farrell, Director of Perkins Institution.

—Merrill A. V. Maynard

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POEMS

MAY MORNING

Not quite rosy, not quite orange,
  It's a salmon-colored morning
Growing paler at the zenith
  Molting into bluish west;
There's a chorus in the maples
  And the locust trees are blooming,
There's a flood of mellow music
  From the hidden robin's nest.

Though I cannot see the river
  I can trace it through the valley
For its banks are near the mountain
  And they hide in pearly mist;
Soon the sun will top the east hill
  And the quiet valley waken;
Soon the river banks will sparkle
  With a thousand flowers dew-kissed.

All the birds know it's May morning;
  Can't you hear their lilting chorus
With a Cardinal's wild singing
  Obligatos rich and clear?
Something in this full May morning
  Seems to whisper to me softly;
Must be God's own quiet whisper
  For I know that He is here.

—Margielea Stonestreet

TO A PUPPY

Master of matchless antics wild,
Roguishly intriguing me,
Frolicsome as a carefree child,
Lithesome agility,
Mirth you impart to me!
I owe you debt of gratitude:
Gone is my apathetic mood;
Gone my sobriety!
Gay, diminutive playmate pet,
Drollery—frivolity;
Irreplaceable marmoset,
Buoyant buffoonery,
Youth you restore to me!

—Gertrude Scott

WHAT A TREE TOLD ME

I lent my ear to listen to a tree,
And this the message it whispered to me:
It spoke not as brooklet, river or sea,
That wonderful message as told by a tree.

Upon the shore I wandered one day,
And talked with the sea and laughed with the spray.
The sea told of strength unending and free;
Such was the talk I had with the sea.

I sat by a brooklet that sparkled along.
It told me of music, laughter and song;
It was a message of babbling glee,
But it was not the voice I heard in the tree.

I strolled by a river one glad day in June,
And its harmony played on my heart like a tune
Of infinite bliss from regions above,
Breathing of patience, courage and love.

Then I lent my ear to listen to a tree.
It told me of peace not found in the sea,
Nor yet by the brooklet that ran by the lea,
Or by the river majestic and free,
When I lent my ear to listen to a tree.

—Alice Luella Holbrook

SPRING LOVE

Bright flowers strewn in verdant field,
On which the gold-shaft sunbeams play:
And perfume to the world they yield,
In gay thanksgiving for this day.
A boy and girl clasped arm in arm,
Their tender lips in rapture swell,
The sun shines down and lights their charm,
As to each other love they tell.
The joys that come with early spring
Are new each morning with the dawn,
For in their hearts each name they sing
Until all other songs are gone.
Their hearts beat 'neath their carnal shield,
As each to each in love they yield.

—Merrill A. Maynard

TO HELEN KELLER

We, in impenetrable silence bound,
In darkness deeper than a starless night,
Were mute through lack of concept of a sound,
Were lost in voids beyond all depth or height.
We knew despair but did not know its name;
Forms moved about us, yet we were alone.
And then, one day God willed it and you came.
You spoke, and silence fled; through darkness shone
The light you held aloft; you bade us leave
The dungeon gloom and follow life's high ways,
Catch heaven's symphonies, aspire, achieve,
Keep step with man and fill with tasks our days.
You are to us a guide, a lodestar bright,
A voice—yea, more, the goddess of our night.

—Hart E. Richelsen

BROW OF THE HILL

The olive tree made moan
With Mary there below,
Hearing her groan,
"Alas! alas! my woe!

"They led Him up the hill
To cast Him down headlong—
My Son who spoke no ill,
But true words to the throng.

"The folk of Nazareth—
How could they bring
Guilt on themselves and death
To Him, their promised King?"

"Woman, why weepest thou?"
She sprang with a glad cry:
"My Son! Alive! But how?"
Through their midst I passed by.

"They could have no power
Unless given them. Come!
It is not yet my hour:
We go to Capernaum."

—Hart E. Richelsen

GREEN

One of God's favorite colors—sure:
The color of clover, tender, lush;
The color of dewy, new-mown hay;
The color of scented moss—the plush
With which spring carpets her flowery way.
The color of lacy maidenhair;
The color of each slim grassblade tall;
The color of ivy, rover fair,
Clambering glad up the garden wall.
The color of waxy mistletoe;
The color of sprouting violets sweet;
The color of poppy buds that grow
Ever more plump midst the bronzing wheat.
The color of palm leaves, fan-like, thin,
The color that charms the butterfly;
The color the sparrow, swallow, wren,
Love as they love the lagoon-blue sky.
The color a garden holds most dear;
The color that sportive lambs find nice;
The color a meadow wears with cheer,
Furnishing ruminants' paradise.
One of God's favorite colors—sure:
A favorite color too of mine:
A hue that blends with the sky's soft blue;
The color of life and vigor fine:
The color of spring which doth here renew.

—Gertrude Scott

TO THE WINGED VICTORY

A dream of ageless beauty moved the heart
Of him who wrought thee into perfect form,
Thou headless triumph of man's ancient art,
Still unsubdued by time's relentless storm.
Long centuries looked on thy flowing grace,
Then vandals smote thee in their impious rage,
And underneath the sands of Samothrace
The centuries hid thee until this age.
Thou art the victory over mutilation;
Thy wings and buoyant poise now scorn defeat
And challenge mortals crushed by tribulation
To rise on wings that need not hands or feet.
Thou dost surpass the sculptor's highest goal,
Thou symbol of the unconquerable soul.

—Hart E. Richelsen

TO MY REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR

Before my dresser I often stand
To powder, or to comb my hair;
And, though I cannot see your face,
Still I'm sure you're always there.

You mimic every smile or frown
And every little thing I do—
If I could look you in the face,
I wonder what I'd think of you.

They tell me that your skin is fair,
Your eyes are blue, your hair is dark:
But I have never heard it said
For beauty you would make your mark.

But if you show forth cheerfulness
And if intelligence is there,
The fact that you're not beautiful
Need never burden me with care.

And so, whatever your faults may be,
My character I would have true:—
Yet, could I look you in the face,
I wonder what I'd think of you.

—Essie Jeanette Thornburgh

GRACE BEFORE MEALS IN THE REFECTORY

Here, from these silent ordered ranks in gray
After the glad intoning "Benedicite!"

Choir chants to choir, the universe addressing,
"His hand He opens ... every creature blessing."

Choir answers choir motifed in hushed apron rustlings
Of servers, in the kitchen's last minute bustlings.

Surely our God is here—that God who fed
Galilean poor with new, with holy bread.

For this heart is caught in the stillness of veiling wings
In that soundless rhythm where march eternal things.

—Sister Mary de Sales

SISTER MARTHA

Though she does not know Orion from the Ram
Their stardust glints in her strawberry jam.
Neuroses are, to her, just poor sick nerves
Needing the laughter of her peach preserves.

One World, Four Freedoms, Peace—for these she prayed
While blending sour grapes with sweet in marmalade.
She grants, the nuns need books, but they'd only clutter
Those shelves she has reserved for apple butter.

Into her Bethany comes the motley guest
To sit with honor—to be served as Christ.
Her ample smile crinkles maternal eyes:
Her wrinkles write "I love"; yes, she is wise.

—Sister Mary de Sales

THE PAINTER AND THE COLORS

The village church was 'most complete,
The stained glass window was not done,
A painter came, with joy replete,
His work in haste was soon begun.

His canvases were spread to paint,
With pallet, brush and books he planned—
Now should it be a well-known saint?
Or Jesus with a children's band?

The artist liked the thought of song,
And so he painted, Jesus, Lord,
Surrounded by a children's throng,
Their throats are swelled in song to God!

With bits of sunshine in their hair
And heaven's glory in their eyes,
Their smiles betray a lack of care;
Their hearts seem filled with glad surprise.

The artist looked and marvelled much,
The smile when Christ smiled on each child
Gives this a sort of holy touch—
The painter's joy was more than mild.

The artist went to bed that night.
He'd show the picture on the morn.
And when he slept he saw a light,
He then heard words of heaven born:

"Your painting is not done, my friend!
The face of every child is white!
For with all colors Christ will blend,
The yellow, red, brown, black, are right!"

With this a brush moved on each face
To make the children's legion grand,
A child reflecting every race;
It made the artist understand:

"Bring all my children unto Me,
In heaven's happiness to share.
Make holy thoughts your reverie,
Come, sons of God, from everywhere.'

—Merrill A. Maynard

ONCOMING FREIGHT

The long, high whoo-oo-oo of the oncoming freight
Trembles along the embankment,
Resounds in the empty night.
The rails grow electric with tension, reverberations
Scurry along their lengths, the air
Is pregnant with humming.

And the hoarse, high whoop of the whistle tightens,
And the headlight flashes, a yellow, hot tongue,
And the whir and champ of the wheels draws closer.

Listen! The wheels are clicking
Out telegraphed ciphers, decoding
In metrical rhythms the breathless hour of arrival.

Rush on, dragon! Rush on!
Slice through the wind with your iron jaws,
Slice through the distance, gobble it up, O dragon!

—Richard Kinney

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

Shadows creeping from the forest,
Shadows 'neath the trees,
Sunbeams piercing through the cloud rifts,
Shadows on the seas,
Shadows filling all earth's spaces,
When the light had fled,
Shadow imps encamped about us,
When the day is dead;
But the greatest in our earth
Is that grim old Shadow Death.

Sunbeams falling in the forest,
Sunshine on the lea,
Shadows falling from the cloud banks,
Sunshine on the sea,
Sunbeams scattering our sorrows,
Putting fears to flight,
E'en the darkest of earth's shadows
Flee before God's light,
For His Son upon a tree,
Did vanquish death for you and me.

—Clarence Hawkes

THE PIONEER SPIRIT

The Pioneer Spirit that mastered things,
And broke the virgin sod,
That conquered savages and kings,
And only bowed to God;
That strength of mind and strength of soul,
The will to do or die,
That set its heart upon a goal,
And made it far or high.

The minute men who fought of old
Had hearts and nerves of steel,
And what they lacked in arms and gold
They made up by their zeal.
With bleeding feet in winter's snow,
They fought for victory.
Where is the will of long ago?
Where is our chivalry?

The covered wagons of the past
Bore heroes staunch and true,
In summer heat and winter blast,
To duty they were true.
The coyotes howled about their camp,
The red man dogged their trail,
Yet nothing did their spirits damp,
Such courage could not fail.

We need such hearts and minds today,
To lead us in the light,
To hold us steadfast in the way,
And show us how to fight.
The mind of Washington again
Could wake the Nation's soul,
And lead us to our destiny,
A great and glorious goal.

Our need is not of gold or grain,
But courage for the hour,
For stouter hearts and clearer brain,
And more of Spirit's power.
We've worshipped everything but God,
We've sought for aught but truth,
So now we feel the chastening rod,
And now we mourn our youth.
Gird up your loins ye men of might,
As your fathers did of old,
And we will win this ghastly fight,
And gain a hundred fold.

—Clarence Hawkes

THUMBNAIL GARDEN

I have a tiny garden
Of flowers, bulbs, and vine;
My neighbor never argues
About what's hers or mine.
Because, you see, it's all for me—
My floral window pot-pourri.

—Lucille Lemp

TO A LAKE

The lake was still as though it seemed to wait
For night wind, the master of its fate,
To stir its surface and at last reveal
The awe and power it would have us feel,
As on the shore we watch its wind-tossed waves.
Too often people found their watery graves
Through idle thoughts or wanton carelessness.
But other days the lake, in festive dress,
Could show a surface smooth as polished glass
And everything in perfect safety pass.

—Dorothy Anne Reece

"TO A DOGWOOD TREE"

(A Legend)

All whorled and bent, disfigured, there you stand
Among the lusty oaks so tall and grand;
Unlovely and abashed, grieved, sad of heart,
That in this cruel thing you played a part.

Your branches then were useful, straight and strong.
"Just what we need to nail King Jesus on!"
Rang out the cry within that surging throng.
A cross was crudely fashioned on the way
To Calvary's Hill. Where Jesus went to pay
For us the price of sin; though sinless, He
Poured out His life upon the Dogwood Tree.

Your hanging branch oft formed the children's swing;
Away up high! As if on fairy wings,
Your branches, too, once thick with leafy shade,
A sheltered trysting place, where lovers made
Those sacred vows, their happiness complete.
It was yours to share this confidence so sweet,
And give to young and old a safe retreat.

The multitude unmindful of your plight,
Went milling on. The Lord Himself draws nigh.
Your leafy arms outstretched, a heaven-born sigh,
Out of the depth your troubled soul doth cry—
"Forgive, O God of nature, pass not by;
Restore again by Thy creative might,
The beauty and the grace which is my right!"

The Man of Sorrows paused, then sadly spake—
"No more shall wicked men thy branches break;
Thy twisted form shall be to thee a shield;
No more shalt thou be forced thyself to yield;
Thus, shalt thou now a blessed influence wield;
Thy blossoms, too, shall bear the mark of shame;
On creamy petals, now a crimson stain,
Then, heart of gold, now crown of thorns remain."

From dark despair and envy I refrain;
Here by these sturdy oaks will I remain
To help some doubting pilgrim faith regain.
With dignity would I my suffering bear;
To Thine own glory, my shorn laurels wear.
When you by chance my shapeless form shall see,
Then think of God's unchanging love for thee,
Who gave His life upon the Dogwood Tree.

—Mrs. W. F. Rex

WAITING FOR THE MAIL

There was no letter in the mail today:
At once the thought occurred that you forgot,—
But surely there was something you could say
To let me know, my dear, that you had not.
There was no letter in the mail today
Assuring me that all was well with you:
Perhaps your cherished note has gone astray—
So all flagging hopes again renew.

There is a letter in the mail today,
And once again the universe is bright;
My foolish doubts have quickly flown away,
Because, my dear, you took the time to write.
In gratitude I bow my head to pray,
For there's a letter in the mail today.

—Lucille Lemp

JOURNEY'S END

They waited by the lake all night,
But there was neither sound nor sight
Of him they waited for
There upon the grassy shore.
It was Tom who had to bend
At the journey's end.
Yet she would not admit defeat
Though the odds against her seemed so complete.

The lake was calm.
Not a ripple stirred its surface.
Suddenly they heard a psalm
Rising, like a caress,
All of them to bless.
(His face radiated joy, yet sadness
Curved the corners of his strong mouth
That had not a word to stress,
Without bringing in the South.)

Although the day had only just begun,
My Mommy's work was almost done;
We shared the breakfast, she and I,
And talked of things long since gone by.
(Her eyes were like the heaven's blue
With starlight shining through.
Her voice, when she spoke, was all tender and gay,
Like spring, when it settles down to stay.)
Truly her heart was purest gold!
Truly her soul was his to have throughout
Eternity.
My thought of her shall never weary or grow old
Until the clouds roll apart and there we'll be
Together in the fold.

—Marion Johns

SAW MILL

Rotating teeth snarl past rotating teeth,
Wolf fangs that rip and tear, two saws whir round.
A forest giant is thrust into those jaws,
A fearful screech, a board falls to the ground.
Houses are born amid this din and dust.

—Fred Filion

CAPTURED

If I would catch the wind,
Enslave it for my own,
Then I must race as free as air
To trip it, bind it with a prayer,
And weight it with a tone.

And yet I claim a friend,
A skyward climbing vine,
For I have tracked your precious thought
And find my dreams in yours are caught
Like bubbles in the wine!

—James Ernest Bell

SUNSET

The beauty of the quiet woods;
The roses with their petalled hoods;
The wooing winds; the whirling wheels
Of silent sunlight, as it steals
In its chariot westward through the skies;
The evening, with its crimson dyes
Of setting sun, the silver song
Of yon glad stream that glides along
Through moonlit garden and star-gemmed wood,
Reaching at length the endless flood
Of the great ocean, vast and deep;
And then, the lovely birds that sleep
Beneath the kindly wings of night.

—John J. Duffy

LULLABYE

When the gentle summer night whispers soft and low,
And the evening breezes light rock me to-and-fro,
Comes my dream of Paradise,
Angel-guardian from the skies,
Wafting tenderest lullabies, whispering soft and low.

With the new-born light of day, though night's
gladness die,
Though my dream may fade away in the star-kissed
sky,
Come, my love, to find thy rest
In the harbor of my breast.
While I sing thee, love, to rest with a lullabye.

—John J. Duffy

JUNE RAIN

When footsteps of the rain are walking,
Tiptoe on the grass,
There drifts the sound of fairies talking,
Talking as they pass;
And, with their voices, laughter mingles
Gaily as they go,
Repeating time-enchanted jingles,
Fro, and to and fro.

If you are still and if you listen,
Chance that you will hear
Why faces of the pansies glisten
When the dawn is clear;
Why summer winds are softly scented
At the woodland's edge,
And how a child can lie contented
On a sun-steeped ledge.

When footsteps of the rain tripping
Light, across the land,
And sleep comes, like an old spell slipping
From a magic hand—
Remember then, amid that blended
Choir of fairy-talk,
That April dreams are being tended
While June raindrops walk.

—Mary Frances Edwards

NOT FAR AWAY

When someone told me yesterday
My loving friend had passed away
A pang I'd never known
Began to make its presence felt--
I wished that heavy lump would melt:
I stood there sick, alone.

Just then I heard a step, a voice,
Which made my bursting heart rejoice:
She yet could bring me cheer.
That body's lying cold and still,
But Mrs. Martin never will
Be far away ... She's here.

—Martha Jane Ragan

SWIFTER THAN ALL SPEED

No rocket courses like those prayers
That, launched from life's fallen crest
Passing Cherubim on star-paved stairs,
Before the Throne find rest;

Radar fingers empyrean bars—
Hearts close on their muted sighs
But beyond the utmost sweep of stars
Our Father's heart replies.

—Sister Mary de Sales

LOVE PATTERNS

Love used to ride upon a milk-white charger
To storm a castle for his lady's smile:
But patterns change and in a world grown larger
My hero climbed the skies and flew a while.
Then love grew rich and great among his brothers;
Daytimes he counted gold—by moonlight he
Assembled lustrous pearls—no, not for others,
But all wrapped up in ermine just for me.
My love who shares this yellow kitchenette
Has never owned a horse in any stable;
His wings are folded now without regret,
The pearls I wear are just a lovely fable.
Yet when the streetcar brings him home each night
Walls stoop to listen to our hearts' delight.

—Elsie Cowan

PRIEZ POUR NOUS

This is a strangely solemn hour. Here by the peaceful Seine
Lies beautiful Paris mourning her sons' untimely death.
We still remember her lively and gay, then savagely fighting,
Fighting for freedom with stifled breath.

Where are our victories, brave maid of Orleans?
All empty and shallow, so much like your own.
Tyrants still function, the witch hunt still on, and flagrant the faggots.
Pray for us, Joan.

—Rachel Jacoby

SPRINGTIME IS HERE, MY LOVE

Springtime is here at last, my love,
Among woodlands and highland-hills;
Let's stroll together in the bloom,
And sway with ripples of the rills.

The song of love sings everywhere,
Above the meadow and the field,
Like singing birds and beating hearts,
Like flutes and cellos on the wind.

Springtime is here at last, my love.
The chill of winter is now warmed,
Among these hills the sun is warm,
As warm as loving girl and boy.

A joy of souls is born with spring,
And arm in arm we drift in realms
That once were plain and very drab,
But now are new and heavenly.

—Russell C. Vasey

GYPSYLAND

When you are feelin' sorta weary,
And you want a change o' scene,
An' you are longin' for the river,
And the woods and fields of green.

Get yourself a trailer,
An' be a gypsy guy,
An' go trailin' in your trailer
Out beneath the open sky.

You can go roamin' round the country,
As they did in days of yore,
And your heart will be a-singin'
As it never did before.

For I tell you, guy, it's restful,
Beneath those skies of tender blue,
With the woods so green and fragrant,
And the sun a-shinin' through.

You can camp upon the mountains,
You can camp upon the plain,
You can camp beside the river,
Or a field o' growin' grain.

And the breezes seem to whisper,
As you roll along the way,
If you stop to listen,
You can hear them softly say,
Trailin' in your trailer,
Through the woods an' fields an' dales,
Trailin' in your trailer,
Over the forkin', windin' trails,
An' I tell you it is glorious,
An' it makes you feel so grand
As you're trailin' in your trailer,
Over the trails of Gypsyland.

—Burnie Devine

COUNTRY SUMMER

Summer was about us then, the white clouds flying,
The sunlight poured gold on the meadows and the woodlands dark with foliage,
The air was an ocean of warmth after the coldness of winter, an ocean of tropical air that washed about us.

The red barn basked in the sunlight, and the farm-buildings basked.
The large white house at the end of the lane reflected the light in heat waves,
And the wheat fields surrounding the house flowed away like amber in the wash of the tropical air.

(Do you remember, old man, sitting alone in your dooryard in the sun,—
Do you remember the bleak light breaking through the frosted panes,
The winter light touching you there where you hugged the warm hearth and dreamed of the wheat in July?)

Summer was about us then, the summer of sunlight and bloom,
And the old men sat in their dooryards with chairs tilted back,
And the sun was their hearth, and the sky their room.

—Richard Kinney

AMERICA MINE

Cement and steel, stone and wood—city's song!
If any and all of this is wrong
Its maker, man, will praise and blame,
The best is but the one from which he came.

The mills, a stream, and scattered homes—town's
song.
Enjoyed the better by those who belong.
The leisure and bustle of hand and heart
Possesses our men in far the greater part.

Good earth, plant life, and bird chants—country's
song!
From country's men was born a nation strong,
From people rich with living close to God.
With strength of brawn and power from the Lord.

The rains and rivers, yes, and time, flow on
To bring the blood of life for blond-topped corn;
For table, silo, trough and bin to fill,
Along with that which goes to the grist mill.

The humming strains of jazz the Negroes sound,
On which conservatives have ever frowned
And yet its art flows in the nation's blood
With rivers, rain, yes, time and labor's thud.

A host of children hurry home from school
A gay Champlain, a Lincoln and a Gule,
Americans live on as heroes loved
In mind and heart and book, forever dubbed.

Above the hills of Hampshire's state
The Old Man stands, a constant guard;
His profile bold and ever great,
By snows and rains and winds is marred.

And in the sunrise of each day there stands
Above the turmoiled harbor of New York
A statue built to symbolize our plans,
Our Lady of Liberty and crown and frock.

These two, at least, I know are guards
Of nature's and Man's America Mine;
From Hampshire crags to California yards,
From murky mines to where stars brightly shine.

In health, happiness and secure homes
I live as part of this GREAT America Mine.
America, America, I stand
Together with a host of citizens
Who join their country's and their God's command;
Our union stems from where the truth begins.

—Merrill A. V. Maynard

SHADOW TIME

At evening, when the sun slides down the West,
The shadows waken from their time of rest.

They crouch and stretch and travel to the East;
The bulk of shrub and rock is much increased;

They mimic each small gesture of the trees
As branches sway to every transient breeze,

And who dares say, when shadows play about
"There are no giants, children, have no doubt."

Yet all young hearts, till fervid fancy pales,
Believe at shadowtime in fairy tales.

—Elsie Cowan

LIKE AS A CHANDLER FASHIONS HIS CANDLES

The honeycomb, unwalled,
Drained of its purloined sweet
With formlessness is palled
By heat;

Hearted with Faith it dares
In this new guise to claim
The self-squandering that bears
His Flame.

—Sister Mary de Sales

THIS TODAY

Today the snows fell on our eastern town,
With a soft, pelting, little endless sigh
Of infinite flakes, that bring the pure sky down,
Till I can look upon the chilled sky,
And taste cool bits of heaven on my tongue;
I walk in such a changed and luminous night,
Such as gods inhabit while yet young.
All day snow fell and in the gathered light,
In a pale shadow cast in a blue gloom,
I saw you then, snow-image, Love of the moon.

You and the memory of this "Today"
On the ivory hill, beyond the town's barbed wire,
Where all the clumsy pine trees bent our way
As if a breath could blow them into fire.
Forever, may I, like the cockle shell
The broken wanderer bring away in band
When breathed upon in thought, peal forth the fresh swell,
And it seems to be the island hollowed in the hand.
Now from a host of visions I shake one,
And from the darkness shines my shocking sun.

But should that sun shine fruitless in your eyes—
Those eyes a different magic set apart
To see through the ice crystals of the wise,
Into the gladness that now stirs my heart.
Some thoughts are just, but if a siren call
Is sifting through my joy, my soul to shake,
I'll not come plunging through the fleshly wall,
Although the siren waits beyond the break.
You have not called me as a siren would—
I come to you as but a lover should.

My heart was not ceded for a foreign gain;
Native love in my heart now does beat;
It has soaked in the New England rain,
And is now tempered in its harsher sleet.
Love-of-the-Moon, whose strong and gleeful heart
So many men have tried to understand,
And could but make you smaller with their art,
Because you are as various as your land,
As valley-deep, as flowered as the gayest wreaths—
Your love-warmed heart upon my heart now breathes.

—Merrill A. V. Maynard

FRAGRANCE OF THE JASMINE

Evasive fragrance, fragile bloom,
I'm now a lonesome wanderer,
My time and travels all are spent
In finding you and making claims
To share your fragrance constantly.

Your sweet elusive scent
Has me alert when ladies pass.
The woodland perfumes hint of you,
The skill of chemists seek to store
The jasmine sweetness in their vials.

When I am weary I have hope:
A petal hand is beckoning,
And jasmine breath is whispering.
I hurry on the garden path,
And bow to roses, "Pardon me."

The fragrance of the jasmine blows
From the dell, "Glen Appenia."
O "gardenias" or "cape jasmine",
Your fragrance fans me, soothes me,
I seek to make my rest with you.

—C. Neville Roberts

WALDEN IN AUTUMN

Off at a distance trumpets peal,
Sounding alarm for changes real!
Autumn is here! and winter soon
Will hide beauty, and white strewn.

Bright leaves spread on rocky grasses,
Where Emerson's pilgrim ghost passes;
Tall elm, slim birch, now humbly tattered,
Below their bows their raiment scattered.

The rhododendron and the wild rose
Remember they are plants he chose
To leave, to strew his path—
So lean they toward, ever near.

Now hear the timid bird-note echoes
As quietly by their nests he goes;
Now fill the woods with mellow sallies—
The peaceful Walden hills and valleys.

—Merrill A. V. Maynard

THE CHARMS OF LOVE

Your charms are of the rose of spring,
Your smile the splendor of her bloom,
Your love is of her fragrance rare,
Which shall ever make my soul illume.

Your voice is like the seraphs' hymn,
Which inspires and overwhelms my soul.
O love to me is now within,
Nor shall the tempest of tempests roll.

From depths of darkness unto light,
My soul is lifted evermore,
And by your love it stays transformed,
Beyond the realms of mortal shore.

The day of bliss at last has come,
Since I found you, my darling rose,
With joy my heart is overwhelmed,
With you I find the sweetness of repose.

—Russell C. Vasey

THE VOICE

A snapping switch, a waking motor's drone,
A grating needle point, and then—A Voice—
A cheerful, charming, captivating tone
That animates the soul, and makes the heart rejoice.

Softly as refreshing breezes sweep across the moonlit sea,
So the lilting intonation of The Voice is blown to me;
Tender as the birds at nesting; gentle as a shepherd's call
When he gathers in the lambkins as the night begins to fall;
Stately as majestic anthems when their measures rise and roll
From the great cathedral organ to the depths of human soul;
But, alas, the words forsake me when I try to make a choice
Of the richest, and the finest, to delineate The Voice.

Oh, beautiful voice in the Talking Book,
Mellow as sunset in all its hue
Where a sea of green meets a sky of blue;
Lovely as starlight; clear as a brook
Flashing, and gleaming in royal splendor
To garnish the rhythm its ripples engender;
Do you know, can you tell what my thoughts embrace
As we journey along through time and space;
With you ever leading, page by page,
Delightfully blending each accent and word
Of poet, philosopher, novelist, sage,
Into such cadence as no one has heard
Since sailors were lured from their course in the breeze
By singing nymphs of enchanted seas?

To see the fire of inspiration grow
In some benighted mind unknown to fame;
Or watch ignoble passions ebb and flow
Across the fetid slough of vice and shame:
To glean awhile in fertile fields of thought,
And feel the genial touch of culture's winning grace:
To realize the cost of Freedom, dearly bought;
And glimpse the rise of Man to his exalted place
In Nature's plan: and ponder on his fate
When sun, and stars, and earth shall cease to be—
This is what I garner—how I muse and meditate,
When Ethel Everett reads a book to me.

At last, and always all too soon it happens,
The book is finished and she reads "the end":
It is then a sad reflection leaves me feeling
That I have lost a kind and gentle friend.
But as a rainbow flung across the heaven
Is compensation for a day of rain,
So I find solace in the thought that whispers,
"It's not the end, for she'll return again."

—Wilbur Sheron

MOTHER NATURE

There's a balm in Mother Nature
  For earth's headaches and its pain,
For each lonely, homeless creature,
  In the sunshine or the rain.
With her mighty arms she holds him,
  And with tenderness enfolds him.

If one's life is full of crosses,
  Filled with doubt and filled with fear,
There's a gain for all earth's losses,
  There's a sunbeam for each tear,
There's a surcease for all pain,
  In the falling of the rain.

If one thinks his life lacks beauty,
  In the gladsome summer time,
Go to nature, it is a duty,
  And a privilege sublime.
There's a glory in earth then,
  That transcends the thoughts of men.

In the autumn when the forest,
  Dressed in crimson and in gold,
Like a valiant warrior warrest
  Against the coming of the cold,
There's a bold barbaric splendor,
  Far removed from the springtime tender.

In the stern, or colder season,
  When there is but seeming dearth,
There's a wiser, deeper reason
  In the heartbeat of the earth.
For in summer God did plan
  For the winter wants of man.

—Clarence Hawkes

BY THE YULE-LOG

By the Yule-log, there are faces,
  Which will ever come and go,
As the fitful firelight traces
  Scenes and friends of long ago.
And tonight they are most tender,
In the fire light's dazzling splendor.

There are features of a mother,
  Fairest face I ever saw,
And my sister's is another,
  Faces seeming without flaw.
And the love of old they bore me,
Like a blessing now sweeps over me.

There friends, a long procession,
  Each was cherished in his day,
To their love they gave expression,
  Then they quickly went away.
Some were young, some were old,
A pleasure to behold.

Some gave money of their treasure,
  Some gave wisdom, of their wit,
Some gave labor without measure,
  All their gifts were seeming fit.
O the heartache and the prayer,
For a friend, and empty chair.

In the future may we meet them,
  When this earthly trail is done,
In the shadow may we greet them,
  At the setting of the sun.
Free from grief and earthly scars,
Keeping Christmas with the stars.

—Clarence Hawkes

PEACEFUL STREET

Once, in a dream, I walked on Peaceful Street;
The air was filled with fragrance of the flowers;
A friend was with me; we were coming home
From church, upon a quiet Sunday morn.

On Peaceful Street, no roughness there was found,
But perfect smoothness,—safe for weakened feet;
We laughed and chatted as we went along;
For *there I* walked as well as *anyone*.

Sometime, I know that there will surely come
A day, when, confident and unafraid,
With friends sincere, or even quite alone,
I'll walk again on Peaceful Street.

—Essie Jeannette Thornburgh

LOVE'S GIFTS

As the sun-rays awaken the earth,
So my love shall awaken your soul,—
Give you warmth.

As the sun spreads his gladdening light,
So my love shall illumine your life,—
Give you joy.

As the moon lends charm to the night,
So my love shall add grace to your life,—
Give you charm.

As the stars show the mariner's path,
So my love shall be lodestar for you,—
Be your guide.

As the rivulet cleanses its bed,
So my love shall wash grief from your life,—
Bring you cheer.

As the flame softens amber and wax,
So my love's flame shall soften your heart,—
Make you mine.

—Vladimir Karapetoff

CHRISTMAS NIGHT

Night of beauty, night of stars,
Night when earth and heaven met,
Night of music, night of joy,
Night that we cannot forget;

Night of glory, night of peace,
Night when angels filled the sky,
Night of wonder, night of hope,
Night that heard a Babe's first cry;
Child of gladness, Child of love,
Child of virgin given birth,
Child of promise, Child of grace,
Child God sent upon the earth—

Night of beauty, let thy stars
Light man's way eternally;
Child of gladness, give Thy love
Unto all who welcome Thee.

—Muriel Hammond

CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

Lift up your eyes from the dust,
And look into the dazzling light.
Open your idle ears,
And hear the glorious burst of song.
Shake off your petty hates and discontents,
And plunge into the flood of healing love.
Rouse out of your lethargy,
And mount triumphant in wondering joy;
For the Son of God is in your midst.

—Muriel Hammond

MESSAGE OF A ROSE

I found a poem in a rose today,
Beneath the silken petals hid away;
With eager hands, and yet with tender care,
I drew the treasure from the rose-heart fair.

In fragrance heavenly sweet, it spoke to me,
Of beauty I had never thought could be;
And, with caresses soft as fairy lips,
It nestled down upon my finger-tips.

It told me how the sunshine and the dew,
Each morning came with jewels bright and new,
To make for it a crown so exquisite
That queens and princesses might envy it.

It told me, among other lovely things,
Of how an angel brushed it with its wings,
And left upon its petals, sweet perfume,
That much enhanced the beauty of its bloom.

It brought back memories of a bygone day,
When once a lovely friend walked in my way,
Who gave me roses with a lavish hand
And tried my every wish to understand.

At last it said, "For you I've waited long,
To bear my message to the eager throng;
For though it's placed within your hands alone,
You cannot claim it as your very own.

"For thoughts, to be of value to mankind,
Must never hoarded be within the mind;
But, shared with others, they may often be
A guiding star throughout eternity."

—Essie Jeannette Thornburgh

PRELUDE TO THANKSGIVING

WINTER

Before the ice and snow had thawed,
A chart was made of things to do:
Just how to break the sod,
And where to spread the compost, too.
We chose the seeds from catalogs,
And sent to have them back before the time
The pond was filled with baby frogs,
Or sun had made its vernal climb.

SPRING

When birds were on the northern wing,
When earth awoke from wintry sleep,
We staked the ground, and heavy string
Was used to mark the line we'd keep.
We sowed the seeds and prayed for rain,
And soon the buds unfurled in bloom,
And pollen shuffles grain by grain;
A hum of growth is in the boom.

SUMMER

When sunbeams are no longer bent,
When rain makes garden-earth smell food,
The seeds showed what the pictures meant,
But nature was a little crude.
Obedient to yearly plan,
Combining earth and sun and rain,
The work of God, the toil of man,
Stored food in root and pod again.

AUTUMN

The shadows pass more slowly now
That winter chills are in the air;
The sod that yielded to the plow
Began the great pre-harvest fare;
The food this year is plentiful.
God's work and Man's is surely done.
Each grain and fruit and vegetable
Abounds in succour for each one.

OUR PRAYER

Our Father, and our fathers' God!
This feast we share with thanks
For skill and strength to turn the sod
And add to flesh of cattle flanks.
In pilgrim precedent we pray
With thanks for blessings through the years
That pass from their Thanksgiving Day
To this our prayer of festal cheers.

—Merrill A. V. Maynard

TO A FORGET-ME-NOT

Flower of the heavenly firmament,
Blue as the azure main,
Wooed by the mighty sun so bright,
Kissed by the gentle rain.

Hide not thy dainty loveliness
In sweet humility;
Did not the hand that fashioned me
Caress and fashion thee?

One flower, a blessed legend tells,
Once to the Father came;
It stood before the shining throne
And asked of God its name.

"Forget-me-not." The Father smiled,
And touched thee tenderly;
Oh, if again it could be so,
Sweet flower, forget not me!

—Elizabeth Crimmins

RAIL FENCE

Between these fields of variegated greens which everywhere
Checkerboard the land, the old rail fence
Straggles towards the skyline.

And sometimes straying it meets deep ditches,
And for a way they run alongside one another,
And chatter of the lost generations.

Below toward the valley the old fence dipping,
Goes downward toward the lush green reeds where they're growing,
And there where the stream wanders by, it makes a sudden crossing.

Roam on, old-timer, roam on—over the field with its yield of memories,
Skirting the marsh with its harsh remembrance of pain.
Roam on you grey old-timer, roam on—lead us back to the sunset of glorious crimsons.

—Edward C. Joseph

HILL WINDS

Hill winds grow restless through the long blue days;
Unchallenged, they may gather columbines
To fling their fragrance where the wild fern stays,
And toss their petals to the sober pines.

Hill winds play shepherd to the clouds that pile
Themselves sometimes like frightened sheep; they speak
Authoritatively; they whistle while
They fold each cloud about its mountain peak.

Hill winds, stoop down! Forsake your upland valley;
For one brief moment be identified;
Ignore the dusty heat of this foul alley;
Come in this room—the window's open wide.
Bring just one perfumed breath from your cool valley
Where thought—yes, life itself is clarified.

—Elsie Cowan

AN UNSEEN PILLAR

I shall not weaken ties
That bind you to your own;
Thru me you'll love your dear ones
Even more.
I only wish to be
An unseen pillar in your home,
For you to lean upon.

I shall not take your time,
Nor ask for gold or gifts.
I'm satisfied to be
An unobtrusive trinket in your room
To lay aside,
Or in an idle hour of dreams
To think about.

I shall not be your duty nor a drag,
Nor even pleasure in your life;—
If I may only be for you
An essence faint and pure,
An atmosphere of love and warmth,
In which to bathe
And be renewed.

—Vladimir Karapetoff

I SHALL COME BACK TO YOU

I shall come back to you in the fragrance of the wind, as it blows over the fields laden with freshly mown hay.
In the song of the birds in the spring shall I return to you, in a baby's smile, and in the questioning look of a lamb.
I shall come back to you in the stillness of a late afternoon,
as you sit by the brook, amidst stones and moss.
As you walk in the woods, I shall look at you with affection, from the tree trunks, and whisper to you tenderly through the twigs.
Wait, O beloved, for my call, for the call of my true self;
wait till the deceitful heat of my flesh shall have burned itself to ashes.
Then the life-giving warmth of my soul, released from its fiery prison walls, will return to you, like a fragrant summer breeze that blows over the fields laden with freshly mown hay.

—Vladimir Karapetoff

PERSONAL FUTILITY

Four walls round me rising:
Shadows improvising;
Echoes tantalizing!

Shadows! echoes! echoes! shadows!
Never, never compromising;
Never, never harmonizing.

Shadows! echoes! echoes! shadows!
Mercilessly emphasizing
These four walls around me rising.

Despite these walls,
So faint—yet, clear,
My Savior calls,
And I draw near.

Instinctively, I prayed—
By His Will I seemed swayed;
The violence in my soul, allayed.
This new faith—may it never fade.

—Marion Johns

HARVEST SMOKE

The bitter-sweet of leafy pyre
Is heavy on the wine clear sighs
That rake the color-laden fire,
And smoke of autumn tints the skies.

The Joseph's coat of harvest time
Enshrouds the life and rest of trees
In rhythm bound with artist's rhyme,
And freedom's sway has greater ease.

It's autumn with the longer nights
And cooler days that make the home
A scene of many festal rites,
And fields are naked when we roam.
The earth, the sky, indoors and out,
Blend rising thanks in Harvest Smoke.

—Merrill A. V. Maynard

THINK ON THESE:

A rustic cabin built of logs,
The scent of pines on every breeze,
A host of virgin woodland trees,
A lake that's filled with croaking frogs,
The sound of far-off baying dogs,
A hive of busy working bees,
A book that's fallen to your knees,
Escape from stuff in catalogs.

Is it not grand? a power strong?
A manly vigor surges forth
And with the joys of life's new song
Like pioneers, it sends us forth!
When I am sad I think on these,
Then turn to chores with greater ease.

—Merrill A. V. Maynard

BE LISTENING, MOTHER

Be listening, Mother, when I sing,
Tomorrow morning, for our King;
You who live so near His throne
Can hear and know my every tone.
I will select from out my store
Of songs, one you have loved before;
Then humbly, prayerfully, I'll sing,
In church, tomorrow, for our King.

—Essie Jeannette Thornburgh

PATHWAY BACK

Memory, with its strange renascence, comes to press its claim
And swiftly retraces the pathway back to childhood.
Forgotten faces rise waiting to be fitted to elusive names.

The road to school passes by the miller, the blacksmith,
The jeweller, the doctor, and the old innkeeper;
The school bell is ringing, the children flock in to the teacher.

The old home appears unchanged by years; butterflies hang drunkenly on the lilac hedge, the appletree showers white petals;
The door stands wide: inside across the ledge we see the stairway;
The living room is the same—the kitchen filled with welcoming odors.

All the faces are there, each answering to a familiar name;
Enveloping love and tenderness are there. Memory possesses us
Until only the far-away forgotten things, moving on shadowy wings,
Are real.

—H. E. Richelsen

TWILIGHT

Shrouded in mist, the azure clouds float by
Like shifting islands, in an evening sky,
Leaving behind a silvery trail enhanced
By deepening shadows rifted, moonspear lanced;
To show the tinted background in the West,
Where our spent day still lingers at its best,
While here all nature seems to be at rest.

When across life's twilight years the shadows fall,
And seem to hide the meaning of it all,
May faith lay hold, and deftly rend apart
The clouds of doubt and there reveal the heart
Of God, by whom life's little day is lent;
Hoping with Him eternity to spend,
Where night is not, where day it hath no end.

—Mrs. W. F. Rex

LOUIS BRAILLE

The debt we owe to Louis Braille is vast.
He sought and found a key to open wide
Those doors that shut the blind from thoughts of men.
The thing he built seemed such a minor thing.
Just sixty-three terse signs, from six raised dots.
But here was more than even Braille had hoped.
We read the poems that blind Homer sang
In that first dawn; or drift with Huck and Jim
Again by raft, down legend-laden stream;
Or weep with Milton for the fall of man;
And sense that beauty gentle Keats records,
By slightest pressure of the finger-tips.

—Fred Filion

TO A SUNFLOWER

O sun-kissed flower that stands alone,
How canst thou happy be?
For Summer's life hath waned and gone,
And Death draws nigh to thee.
The sunbeams kiss thy stately head,
The raindrops patter down,
Till thou didst wear what God hath made
For thee,—a golden crown.

I've watched thee grow from day to day,
And even from hour to hour,
Till thou shalt soon be cast away
In Death, sweet, hopeful flower.
So, whilst thou livest, kiss the sun,
And let its rays kiss thee;
For thou, dear flower, that stand'st alone,
Hast lived thy life for me.

—John J. Duffy

THE HEART AT CHRISTMAS TIME

When Christmas nears, the human heart throws out
All schemes of selfishness and turns about
To fill itself with thoughts of gentle things,—
Soft candlelight and stars and tinsel strings,
Pink frosted cakes and popcorn, carols sung,
Young hearts made glad and older hearts kept young.
Pine boughs and mistletoe hung up with laughter;
Dear memories to hold for long years after
Enchanted bells are still. All verses rhyme
With love and fellowship at Christmas time.

—Elsie Cowan

O LONELY NIGHT

O lonely Night, that closeth round my dwelling,
Thy wings are spread before my closing eyes.
Yet, amid thy loneliness, a joy foretelling
That I shall so soon behold my Paradise!
O darksome Night! Thy lonely hours are filling
My inmost soul, with joys so bright and thrilling!

O fadeless flowers! bright jewels from the sky
Where love and adoration pledge their vow,
Let us be happy here,—just you and I,
While evening breezes murmur soft and low.
O brightest Night! lend now thy crimson beams
To make more grand the image of my dreams!

—John J. Duffy

THE LOST WIND

Oh, have you seen the wind today?
I've searched for him almost everywhere:
High on the hills, and in the dales,
And yet, I cannot find him there.

Please, have you seen the wind today?
Ive asked the breezes, all in vain,
They only stayed to fan my check
And then they danced on their way again.

Will no one tell me where he hides?
I ran with him but yesterday;
He did not bid me then "Adieu".
Oh, have you seen the wind today?

—Elizabeth Crimmins

ALEXANDRINES

An alexandrine is a living, sentient line:
Its dozen throbs are motifs in your life and mine.
The crunchy rolls that give the day a food starched start,—
A good round twelve,—the warmers of the workman's heart;
The figures on the clock, bold stations where the hands
Unload their merchandise of time, the hours' sands;
The year's imponderable diastole, so still,
So sure, the minion month-beats, serving well His will;
One alexandrine limped in all the verse of time:—
The Judas-syllable so jarred His twelve-toned rhyme.

—Edward W. Jenkins

CAROL ON THE WIRE

What do you hear, little wren? What do you say?
You perch and cock your head so curiously.
I watch you from my window, while my key
Sends dots and dashes through your roundelay
On wires that, heavy-freighted night and day,
Warn us of war, and troubles yet to be.
My little wren, do you know Morse? Tell me,
If so, how can your singing be so gay?

Along those wires our messages have flown—
They feel the pulse of news from land and sea,
Of deaths, and strife, of hands that grasp and grope;
Yet you sing on, while all the nations groan—
A fragile, carefree, silver melody!
O singing wren, is yours a hymn of hope?

—Grace Hitchcock

YOUR YEAR

In a moment now, the clock will strike,
And the whistles all will blow,
And a fresh young year be welcomed in,
That has twelve long months to go.

And what you do with this fresh young year
Is in great part up to you;
If you let yourself be crushed by fear,
You'll regret it all year through.

If you look ahead with one resolve
That you'll conquer, come what may,
Then you'll have the year you're dreaming of,
On this dawning New Year's Day.

—Dorothy Anne Reece

SPRING LILACS

Love is like a cancer,
It eats and gnaws at the heart:
It grasps a ready answer
When the tears arise and start!

Love is like a contagion
That spreads to the outer realm,
While fancies should imagine
That we seek to grasp the helm!

—Byrne Rader

WAR

Out of the black, primeval mud,
Conceived in lust and greed and blood,
A thing so foul, that at its birth,
A horror, seized upon the earth;
And angels wept at nature's shriek,
"Forgive me God, for I am weak,"
And, fiends in hell shout, "Set him free,
We have no place for such as he."

Slowly from the loathsome slime,
We watch the monster creep and climb,
To ravage earth, and drink of gore,
And ever, ever thirst for more,
While children weep and women moan
And men, in torment, writhe and groan,
And terror reigns over land and sea
Till earth doth quake in agony.

Is it for this that lovers woo?
For this that babies smile and coo,
Watched over by mother's tender care;
Is this their heritage to share?
O man, of vaunted skill and might,
Who viest with bird in aerial flight,
And bid'st the lightning, do thy will;
When wilt thou ever cease to kill?

Disease of flesh you've learned to heal,
The surgeon's knife we do not feel,
But, war, the worst of all our ills
Is free to torture as it kills.
Go, hide thy head, in mortal shame,
And boast no more thy wisdom's fame;
Thou map'st the course of onrushing star,
But cannot, will not conquer war.

Upward, onward, tardy man,
To know the Logos' mighty plan
Of peace and brotherhood sublime,
Much higher yet, thou needs must climb.
Out of the dimness of the sod,
To keep thy rendezvous with God;
And learn a nobler, better way
Than thus, to torture, maim and slay.

—Eugene E. Fox

PATHS

It's fun to follow dimming paths
Where others walked when paths were new!
Pale ribbons twisted in the green
Of wooded hills that beckon you.

What may you find where pathways end?
A spring enlaced with columbine;
A desolated cabin crouched
Beside some long abandoned mine.

A lofty rock where silence sits
In view of hills in glory dress—
It's more than fun to follow paths
And glimpse some special loveliness.

—Elsie Cowan

WINGED CALENDAR

The infant year matures so fast,
Before you know him, he has passed;
Upon your hand a flake of snow,
Then, eagerly the west winds blow
To guide you where first violets grow.

Pale blossoms make their fragrant vow
There will be apples on the bough;
The robins give faint farewell trills
While roses join the daffodils.

One inhalation deep and sweet
Of scented days through amber heat;
Prophetic crickets roam the clover,
A brown leaf falls—and summer's over.

The year strides on, kept hale and strong
By festivals and Christmas song.
Almost before you glimpse at all
Deep meanings wrapped in spring and fall,
New calendars adorn your wall.

—Elsie Cowan

FADED FIGURES

My sobbing, sighing echoes haunt the night,
As often, when the soul must quit the flight,
The hollow plaudits of the world go on,
The bigger ashes of these poor remains
Are on my head; I mourn what is no more;
Now only dreary sackcloth hides the strains
Of tearful hours beyond the temple door;
O heart, I hear them pass with eerie tread,
And feel their cheerless presence in the dark;
Are these but faded figures of the dead,
On whom some demon horde has left its mark?
Depart, sad ghosts, and leave me here alone,
Or stay and weep for what we both have known.

—Rudy Story

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!"

Here in the tabernacle all alone,
The little Lord Jesus rests on His throne.
With arms outstretched, He seems to plead
For love—of which He has such need.
Ah, would that we could be less blind
To the blessings He gives mankind!

As we kneel at the Altar to receive
Christ in the Blessed Sacrament,
We hear again this sweet comment:
"Dear ones, do not so grieve!
In your love I believe."

Each year, in the stillness of the midnight hour,
Christ renews His mystic power,
Becomes a tiny babe in arms
To free the world from evil charms.
Ah, would that we could always see
The value of His company!

Although we spare only just a minute,
Let's include Our Savior in it!
Whispering softly thus,
"Happy birthday, Jesus!
You are no longer now alone;
We're here to worship at your throne."

—Marion Johns

DAYBREAK

The streets of the town lie deserted and still—
Still as the aisles of cathedrals are still
With the unseen Presence. The houses
Slumber dark and inert as the stones.
A small bird chirps in his sleep, then is silent.
Nothing moves save the droplets of mist on the branches
Dripping slowly down on the ivy
Drop after drop like heart beats.

Then even the mist for an instant ceases to fall.
The stars pale and are gone in the gray dusk.
Out of the east, faint as the first tones of a choir
Come the first rose streaks of the dawn.
The birds in spontaneous chorus answer and welcome the sun.
The light rolls westward.
Brighter and brighter its flame
Till it bursts in full burnished glory. ...
It is day again.

—V.

FUTURITY

I wrote a bit of verse and thought it good;
"Perhaps it will change our history's course," I said,
"I'll send it to the printer right away!"
But there was work that could not be delayed;
And so I put my precious verse away,
And said, "I'll send it off another day."

One day I found my great, world-shaking lines,
And, reading them, I found that they were naught
But an expression, in a clumsy way,
Of hackneyed and too-oft-repeated thought.
I could not see why I had thought them great,
And I was glad I had let the matter wait.

And I now wonder, at my daily tasks:
"How will my work withstand the test of time?
When it is cold, can I still call it good,
Or will it all seem shabby as that rhyme?
How will the story of my life be told?
What can they say of me when *I* am old?"

—Mary Walton

THE HEAVENLY MUSICIAN

(A Tribute to Vachael Lindsay)

He heard a singing in each star...
He heard a music and a dreaming...
This roving moon, his steel guitar,
Through him, leaned closer in its beaming.
For he could hear the comets play
Their far lone flutes beyond the day,
And from star-clusters catch each thin
Winding wisp of violin. ...

He heard red rumblings from the sun
Rattle and thunder, rattle and clang
Through the reeling world till they pulsed as one,
And the round, revolving welkin rang.
And he would beat his barrel-house drum
Till the earth, and the air, and the stars grew dumb,
With a rising clamor and cannibal roar
That burst high heaven and shook hell's floor...

Yet he was kind, and the small grass,
Not disheartened by the drum
Rampant step, and raucous brass,
Whispered low, and he would come
Back from the far galactic walls,
Ethereal pomps, and wizard halls,
To lean, at length, those cosmic ears
Close to clover, as to spheres.

—Richard Kinney

THIS HEART

Here in this heart strange things were put away
Concealed, may be, as long as it can beat,
Measures composed to make this life complete,
Glimpsed at in dreams alone of love's array;
For her etching emblazoned on the mind,
Always possessed the same from year to year,
During this life, as its problems I find
Because there's work to do, though she does not appear.
Some day we'll meet, but then not in a dream,
Living she will appear—not as an unreal
Mirage imagined during a night's dream—
Assuredly, she'll know all I conceal.
A lot to share, a lot we must explain
Blending a love so strong it shall remain,

—C. S. Glass

BEAUTY TO SHARE

When I discover some new work of art,
Some poem, exquisite in every part,
Or story or discourse of special worth,
Whose meaning strikes response within my heart;

Or when I visit some strange, lovely place,
Where Nature shows her grandeur and her grace
Unsparingly, so I'm made to feel
That I could almost catch the dreams I chase;

Or when I hear great music, sweeping, strong,
Or some less solemn strain of tender song,
Which stirs my feelings and awakens thought,
And lingers in my memory for long;

Or when my soul in some still hour alone
The sure reality of God has known,
I feel a great desire to share with you
That beauty and to claim it for our own.

—Muriel Hammond

THE BEAUTIFUL

The morning sunshine streamed into my room,
Touching my face and hair with warm caress;
Like some kind, helpful friend,
It seemed to greet
Me, bringing joy and gladness to my heart.
And I said, "*It* is beautiful!"

A vase of flowers upon my dresser stood;
The air was gladdened with their fragrance sweet;
Lightly I touched their petals, and observed
Their perfect shape, and texture delicate;
And I said, "*These* are beautiful!"

A friend talked with me understandingly,
Of troubles that had long perplexed my soul;
Her words of wisdom, and her kindly voice
Gave to my soul hope and strength again.
And I said, "*She* is beautiful!"

Within the greatest of all books, I read
That God, to save a world of sinful men,
Whom He has loved with everlasting love,
Had sent His Son to die upon the cross.
Oh, this is *most beautiful*!

And then a great joy came into my soul,
To think so much of beauty I had found;
Sunshine and flowers, kindness, friends, and God!
What more of happiness could one heart need,
To make life truly beautiful?

And so I am resolved that I will *hold*
These lovely things within my little world;
To smile; to be as useful as I can;
To laugh and sing and work, and then at last,
To own the *real*, the holy beautiful!

—Essie Jeannette Thornburgh

TO YOU, WALT WHITMAN

And like a powerful pine-wood, wild and high,
Whose resonant branches to rough sea-winds moan—
Articulated tumult, deftly thrown
Down resinous aisles, whose echoes multiply—
These cadences of casual song defy
Restrictive timbers, and, high overblown,
The thund'rous pattern sinks to undertone,
Wind music from unfathomable sky.

No patter of light drops, insipid rain,
Effeminate breezes wafting lily-blooms,
Or moonshine amours haunt these rugged glades!
Primordial passions through these tap-roots strain:
Across these spires the illimitable looms;
And God-in-Nature walks among the shades.

—Richard Kinney

NEW NEIGHBORS

New neighbors in the house next door today!
We listen anxiously and wonder whether
Or not they have some boys who'll want to play
Baseball on our front lawn in every weather.
Perhaps they are the kind who love to stand
And snap the buds right off our choicest roses;
Will she soon hurry over, cup in hand—
They simply must have sugar, she discloses.

And what of him—will he play saxophone?
Or harbor pigeons for his soul's beguiling?
Which breed of dog will plant its precious bone
In our petunia bed? We pause then, smiling,
For while we ponder on the folk next door,
They doubtless fear the same from us—or more.

—Elsie Cowan

BORN TO THE SOIL

Before we left the narrow lane for larger landscapes,
We turned to our old oak tree, once more
Remembering the many mornings it sheltered us
from the mounting sun.

Now it rained; the rusty hinges of the garden gate
rattled in the wind,
Echoing our thoughts: Beware of the bestial road,
beggars of fortune.

However, we marched ahead,
Encumbered with accumulated customs and traditions.
Untutored, and not attuned to the rumblings of
adventure,
We soon fled the implacable, complex city. ...
In the vicinity of home we knelt, and kissed the
friendly soil.

—Rae W. Jacoby

ONLY LOVE ME

When my castles lie in ruins
Deep in tear-stained desolation,
And their beauties, lost, forgotten,
Are but bitter consolation,
Then, my darling, only love me.

When I set myself to building
Gay new castles for tomorrow,
And a host of hands start helping,
Laying sorrow upon sorrow,
More than ever, only love me.

When I'm mocked by empty echoes
Of my promises long broken,
And I ache to say I love you,
But my love remains unspoken,
Only love me; only love me.

—Rudy Story

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M
Maynard, Merrill A.
They sing in the night.

Date Due			